

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO†

EXCERPTS FROM OUR STATE MEDICAL JOURNAL

Vol. XIII, No. 9, September, 1915

From Some Editorial Notes:

The State Medical Society and Plague.—All the various jublations over the eradication of plague in San Francisco and the development of the idea of a plague-free city by properly constructing all buildings so that they are rat-proof, have left out of the record of events the most essential part in the work which was played by the Medical Society of the State of California. At this particular time, when so much reference is being made to the plague fight and the bearing of the successful result upon the possibility of having an Exposition in San Francisco, it seems not unfitting to go back a bit, think of the facts as they were, and place a few words upon the record. To that end and for that purpose we have asked a gentleman who was very active in his interest in the plague situation from the very beginning, to set forth the facts in relation thereto which came within his personal knowledge. The "Williamson Board of Health," to which he refers, was the board thrown out—but refusing to go out—by the then Mayor of San Francisco. Dr. John Williamson was president of the board. The President of the State Society, at the time the mass meeting was called in 1908, was Dr. George H. Evans of San Francisco. Mr. King and Mr. Friedlander, of the Merchants' Exchange, were about the only members of commercial bodies who took the trouble to come to the meeting. The law passed making it a felony to say that plague existed in the State of California; his representative, Doctor Anderson, did what he could to help him along. A more unwholesome condition of things than existed at that time can hardly be imagined.

In 1900, plague was epidemic in Chinatown. I have forgotten the total number of verified cases (121, I think), but the writer personally attended a great many autopsies, reports of which were wired to the *Journal* of the American Medical Association and published. Notwithstanding the efforts of the Williamson Board of Health at that time, and the Public Health Service under Doctor Kinyoun, to make public the facts, a crusade of vilification and denial was carried on by the business interests and the press which was shameful in the extreme. While business men and press representatives personally and privately expressed their conviction that plague existed, the policy of the press was one of suppression of the facts.

About this time a Federal Commission, composed of Professors Barker, Novy and Flexner, was appointed by the President to investigate plague in San Francisco. The report of this commission established beyond doubt the existence of this disease and its report became a public record. In spite of such undisputed proof, the policy of denial was persisted in by the press and business interests, aided by Dr. Winslow Anderson and his paid "bacteriologist."

Early in 1908, officers of the State Medical Society, who had been watching with alarm the constantly increasing incidence of plague among the rats captured, concluded that the influence of the organized profession of the State must be exerted in order to obtain the publicity necessary, so that measures for eradication could be undertaken. The influence of the Public Health Service under Doctor Blue, the City Board of Health, and a committee of the County Medical Society had been unsuccessful in forcing publicity.

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† This column strives to mirror the work and aims of colleagues who bore the brunt of Association activities some twenty-five years ago. It is hoped that such presentation will be of interest to both old and new members.

BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA†

By CHARLES B. PINKHAM, M. D.

Secretary-Treasurer

Board Proceedings

The results of the written examination, held in San Francisco June 25 to 27, show that 155 graduates of medical schools, including several from foreign countries, passed the physician and surgeon's examination, and nine failed.

The highest mark (92½ per cent) was made by Otto Allen Will, Jr., M. D., a graduate of Stanford University School of Medicine, June 16, 1940.

Twenty-one chiropodists passed, with no failures.

Two drugless practitioners passed and four failed.

News

"Dr. A. Elmer Belt of Los Angeles has been chosen as new president of the California State Board of Health, it was announced yesterday. A graduate of the University of California Medical School in 1920, Doctor Belt has been an instructor there, and at present is an associate professor in the College of Medical Evangelists and the California Institute of Technology at Pasadena." (*Los Angeles Examiner*, July 10, 1940.)

"... Dr. Vincent Carroll, Laguna Beach, was appointed by Governor Olson to a four-year term and Dr. J. M. Pendergast to a two-year term as members of the Board of Osteopathic Examiners. . . ." (*Los Angeles Examiner*, July 9, 1940.)

"Dr. Nettie Vollmer, 65, 335 Market Street, Oakland, a self-styled magnetic healer, who can work by 'remote control' if she has a patient's photograph, gave herself up yesterday. The nice man with stomach trouble turned out to be a detective, but Nettie failed to 'foresee' this. The 'patient' was T. P. Hunter, operative for the State Board of Medical Examiners, who obtained one of Nettie's circulars and dropped in to see her. Nettie got out a magnifying glass, looked at his tongue, and told him he was being 'doped by short wave' by someone who wanted to marry him. Hunter asked Nettie to help him. Nettie is alleged to have said that, for \$100, she could 'put the hex' on Hunter's persecutor and relieve his pains. Hunter had a better idea, told Nettie to be in police court at 10 o'clock. She was. She pleaded 'not guilty' to violation of the State Business and Professions Code and her trial date was set for July 24." (*San Francisco Chronicle*, July 19, 1940.)

"The Municipal Employees Health Service Board last night voted approval of payment of \$22,873.57 to the system's doctors, 78 cents on the dollar for their service. The payment is 8 cents more than the April amount, but 4 cents under February's. . . ." (*San Francisco News*, July 18, 1940.)

"... The City Retirement Board has rejected Plan 2, which would have provided services of osteopaths and chiropractors to city employees who are members of the Health Service Board. Plan No. 1 provides service only by doctors of medicine." (*San Francisco Chronicle*, July 25, 1940.)

(Continued in Back Advertising Section, Page 37)

† The office addresses of the California State Board of Medical Examiners are printed in the roster on advertising page 6.

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

(Continued from Text Page 152)

The press and the business interests were unwilling that business should be injured by announcing to the world that plague existed in San Francisco. The public was asleep and ignorant of the danger that hung over the city. The number of infected rats had steadily increased, month by month, from 0.5 per cent in September, 1907, to more than 1.5 per cent in January, 1908. At this time the President of the State Medical Society requested the Council to appoint a committee to use the power of the profession to force publicity. The President was appointed chairman of such a committee and was empowered to choose his own committeemen. Drs. Jno. M. Williamson, H. M. Sherman, John Gallwey and Jas. H. Parkinson were appointed on this committee. After conference with those interested it was decided to call a mass meeting of those prominent in business and professional life. This was done. Six hundred invitations were sent—sixty citizens appeared at the meeting in the California Club Hall one night in January, 1908.

At this meeting a resolution was presented and passed, calling for the appointment of a Citizens' Health Committee of twenty-five. A few days later this committee was appointed by the Mayor, the President of the County Medical Society and the President of the State Medical Society. Thus was inaugurated the campaign against plague in San Francisco, the success of which requires no elaboration here. A few days afterwards a large mass meeting was held upon the floor of the Merchants' Exchange and the necessary publicity was obtained.

From an Original Article on "Statistics of My New Advancement Operation with Report of Cases," by Roderic

(Continued on Page 9)

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J. Lloyd Eaton, M.D., Oakland

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

(Continued from Page 7)

O'Connor, M. D., Oakland.—I do not intend to take up valuable time by giving a description of the operation. This has appeared in the journals on several occasions—the last and most complete being in the *Ophthalmic Record* for December, 1914. For the benefit of those who may not have seen any such account I will say that the object of the method is to avoid constriction of tissues by sutures and tension on sutures. This is done by looping marginal strips of tendon so as to form a double half hitch about a strand of catgut (20 or 40 day). This leaves a central tongue which is slack the amount of the marginal shortening. This central tongue can then be tucked, resected or actually advanced an amount equal to the marginal shortening and the suture holding it can be free from tension during the healing process. In view of the absence of constriction and tension, I claim the method to be mechanically and surgically correct in principle. . . .

From an Original Article on "President's Address Before the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the American Therapeutic Society, San Francisco, Calif., June 21-22, 1915." Some Observations on the Present Status of American Medical Journalism, by Francis M. Pottenger, M. D., Monrovia. . . . I do not wish to be understood as criticizing individual journals as they now exist or have existed in the past, but I desire to point out the need, as I see it, for relieving our present unsatisfactory state of affairs. The *Journal* of the American Medical Association and the journals of many of our state associations are a credit to the profession, and are doing good work in both organization and teaching of scientific medicine; but no one can give more than a passing

(Continued on Next Page)

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The Institutions here listed have announcements in this issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE. For Index, see advertising page 8.

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ALUM ROCK SANATORIUM For Treatment of Diseases of the Chest San Jose, California	FRANKLIN HOSPITAL Limited General Hospital Fourteenth and Noe Streets, San Francisco	PARK SANITARIUM Mental and Nervous Alcoholic and Drug Addictions 1500 Page Street, San Francisco, California
CALIFORNIA SANITARIUM For Treatment of Tuberculosis Belmont, California	FRENCH HOSPITAL General Hospital Geary at Fifth Avenue, San Francisco	SAINT FRANCIS HOSPITAL Limited General Hospital Bush and Hyde Streets, San Francisco
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	LAS ENCINAS SANITARIUM Nervous and General Diseases Las Encinas, Pasadena, California	TWIN PINES Convalescent and Neuropsychiatric Belmont, California
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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

(Continued from Preceding Page)

glance to the situation without seeing that our American profession cannot be dependent upon these for their scientific education. These journals are, and should be, partly scientific in their nature, but they can never fully serve the needs of the American profession in scientific medicine; for their first function is to promote organization and improve the condition of medical men as a body. We need these journals for organization; but, aside from them, we need both general and special journals of national circulation and national interest, which, as they come to our table, will be representative of the best scientific work that is being done in all sections of the country. No one journal can do this, for the acquaintanceship and influence of every editor or editorial board is more or less circumscribed; but the field should be so well covered that, by taking several journals, the subscribers can keep breast of the present state of medical science. . . .

From an Original Article on "Gastro-Intestinal Symptoms in Diseases of the Circulatory System," by Dr. William Watt Kerr, San Francisco.—The relation between gastro-intestinal disorders and affections of the circulatory system is not infrequently overlooked, yet disturbed alimentation may be the only indication of weakened myocardium in elderly people or others who are not subjected to sufficient exertion to awake dyspnea, but whose poor circulation leads to portal congestion with its attendant dyspepsia and even more grave consequences.

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(Continued on Page 28)

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BOOK REVIEWS

(Continued from Page 26)

Atlas of Surgical Operations. By Elliott C. Cutler, Moseley Professor of Surgery, Harvard University and Chief Surgeon of the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital; Formerly Professor of Surgery, Western Reserve University, and Director of Surgery of the Lakeside Hospital, and Robert Zollinger, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Harvard University and Senior Associate in Surgery at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital. Cloth. Pp. 180. Illustrated by Mildred B. Coddling. Price, \$8. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939.

This surgical atlas is designed to meet the needs of the young surgeon and of the surgical residents of hospitals, particularly those not connected with a medical school. The most common general surgical procedures are both illustrated and discussed, using simple but concise plates with accompanying brief descriptions of the essential steps involved. The important anatomical and surgical features of each operation are clearly stressed. In addition, there is a brief outline of the indications for surgery, preoperative care, anesthesia and postoperative care. From the standpoint of operative surgery, this atlas meets a need not covered by even the larger texts. One can readily refresh one's mind on any surgical procedure with the least expenditure of time. There are certain details ordinarily left to the nursing staff, and for this reason the book would be useful in the instruction of surgical nursing.

The Atlas of Surgical Operations would be a very useful supplement in the library of any doctor engaged in general practice, or in the instruction of surgery in a general hospital. The illustrations alone are well worth the attention of the surgeon.

W. E. M.

Clinical Toxicology. By Clinton H. Thienes, M. D., Ph. D., Professor of Pharmacology and Head of the Department of Pharmacology, School of Medicine, University of Southern California, Los Angeles; Attending Pathologist (Toxicology), Los Angeles County Hospital. Cloth. Pp. 309, illustrated. Price, \$3.50. Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1940.

This is an instructive and up-to-date compilation of the subject. The author has organized the material according to the clinical manifestations of the toxic agents in a

manner which will be of service to the student and to the clinician.

Drugs are grouped according to their major site of action and clinical symptomatology. In the first six sections (Convulsant Poisons, Central Nervous System Depressants, Peripherally Acting Nerve Poisons, Muscle Poisons, Protoplasmic Poisons, and Poisons of the Blood) each drug is discussed concisely yet fully as to toxic dose, source and chemistry, absorption, etiology of poisoning, symptoms and actions, fate and excretion, pathology, diagnosis, cause of death, and treatment. The next two sections, principles of treatment and an outline of symptom diagnosis, discuss the broader aspects and integrate the preceding materials in a manner designed as a diagnostic aid. The last section deals with chemical diagnosis of poisoning, containing the most practical and specific methods of detection, and will be a distinct asset in any well equipped laboratory.

P. M.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

(Continued from Front Advertising Section, Page 10)

of the liver, pancreas, stomach and intestines, so that the function of all these organs is seriously impaired; but there is another group of cases from which edema and valvular murmurs may be entirely absent, where the trouble lies in changes that have taken place in the blood vessels and cardiac muscle as part of the ordinary senile degeneration, or in consequence of disease or dietetic excesses; and these are not so readily recognized. . . .

*From an Original Article on "Benzene Treatment of Leukemia," by W. W. Boardman, M. D., San Francisco.—*Of the etiology of the leukemias, we know nothing. The essential morbid process is an excessive and abnormal activity of the leukoblastic tissues of the body, manifested by an increase in the number and an alteration in the character of the circulating leukocytes. A specific remedy would destroy the unknown exciting factor, be it toxic, infectious or

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San Francisco

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what not. Lacking this, our therapeutic efforts are limited to attempts to control the excessive activity of the leukoblastic tissues. For this purpose, arsenic has for years been used; more recently the x-ray, radium and thorium x have been added. With each and all of these measures, striking improvement may occur, but with none do permanent cures result. New hopes were therefore raised by Koranyi's report in 1912 of the striking effect obtained with benzol. . .

From an Original Article on "The Blood in Leukemia," by H. R. Oliver, M. D., San Francisco. From the Serological Laboratory of the Stanford University Medical School.—Leukemia is a malignant (idiopathic) hyperplasia affecting the leukocytic forming tissues, which results in an enormous increase in the production of the white blood corpuscles. This hyperplasia may affect only one type of cell, and there may even be a diminution of the other varieties of leukocytes, or there may be an increase of all varieties, with one type considerably more than the others.

Hughes Bennet, in 1845, described a case of suppuraction of the blood or leukocythemia. A short time after 1845 Vichow described a case and gave it the name "leukemia." It was not, however, until some time later that Ehrlich, by his new method of staining, showed that in the two types the cells were different.

The leukemias were formerly divided, according to their clinical aspects, into the lymphatic, splenic, spleno-medullary, and medullary or myelogenous forms. This has given way to the hematological one of Ehrlich of lymphatic and myeloid, based upon the kind of cell proliferation. . .

From an Original Article on "Roentgen Ray Treatment of Leukemia," by Howard E. Ruggles, M. D., San Francisco.—Since the cases of Schultz in 1901, Pusey in 1902, and Senn in 1903, the reported cases of leukemia treated with Roentgen rays run well into the thousands.

The usual results are more or less rapid improvement in general condition, lowering of white count, and return of differential count to normal. Subsequent relapses are common and are usually difficult to control. Faithful persistence with the treatment and intelligent dosage diminish the possibilities of relapse. There are a good many records of patients who have been symptomatically well for periods of over five years. Contraindications are: (1) acute type; (2) presence of increasing anemia, cachexia, or fever. . .

From an Original Article on "The Routine Examination in a General Hospital for Diphtheria Carriers and a Note on the Schick Reaction," by W. T. Cummins, M. D., Philip King Brown, M. D., and C. L. Bittner, M. D., Harriman Laboratory, Southern Pacific General Hospital, San Francisco.—Modern medicine has made no advance more important than that concerning the prevention of disease. The eradication of yellow fever in Havana is a brilliant example of the potency of prophylaxis. Vaccination, the study of water supplies and sewage disposal, and other hygienic measures have had a marked effect in reducing the morbidity of typhoid fever. The dissemination of certain infections, of known and unknown etiology, is brought about in many instances by the harboring in the tissues of the recovered individual or of the healthy "contact" the infectious agents. Notable among these diseases are typhoid fever, epidemic meningitis, diphtheria and, probably, pneumonia and po-

(Continued in Back Advertising Section, Page 34)

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

(Continued from Front Advertising Section, Page 30)

liomyelitis. Today, the subject of "carriers" commands our attention, and the laboratory must be prepared to examine excreta for the presence of typhoid bacilli and nasal and throat secretions for meningococci and diphtheria bacilli. . .

From an Original Article on "Shall the Medical Society of the State of California Have an Examining Board?" by William Taylor Barry, M. D., Santa Barbara.—Twenty years ago the examining board for the State was the Medical Board of the State Medical Society—the recognized legal (per act of Legislature) certificate-granting body for California. The methods of this board were extremely simple. Upon the presentation of a diploma from a recognized chartered medical college, and the payment of a fee of \$5.00 for registration, license to practice medicine in the State of California was issued. Since that time numerous changes in the medical law have been arrived at, down to the present year with its composite Board of Medical Examiners, together with reciprocity with certain states. Now the question is: "Shall the Medical Society of the State of California return to first principles—with this difference?"

From an Original Article on "Banti's Disease," by Henry H. Lissner, M. D., Los Angeles.— . . . According to Banti the condition begins with enlargement of the spleen, which is followed by anemia, and lastly terminates in liver cirrhosis. It is therefore not possible definitely to make a diagnosis of Banti's disease in those forms of liver cirrhosis in which there is an enlarged spleen. The attempt to differentiate certain forms of splenomegaly from splenic anemia

is also difficult to carry out, since an enlarged spleen occurring with anemia may be caused by other conditions, i. e., malaria, leukemia, pseudo-leukemia, tuberculosis, and hereditary syphilis. However, it may be seriously considered that, in those cases where the Banti symptom complex is present splenectomy is a curative measure, in that anemia, liver swelling an icterus disappear.

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From "Society Reports":

California Pediatric Society, Northern Branch.—The fourth meeting of the California Pediatric Society, Northern Branch, will be held on Thursday evening, September 30, at 8:15, in the County Medical Library. The program will be as follows: I. Treatment of Paralysis Following Acute Anterior Poliomyelitis—Demonstration of Cases—Walter F. Schaller. II. Creolin in Scabies in the Infant—Douglass W. Montgomery. III. Study of the Problem of Dental Hygiene in Children—Guy S. Millberry.

It is hoped that anyone interested in child welfare problems will come to this meeting and join the Society. We will welcome all who are really interested in any phase of child welfare work. William Palmer Lucas, Secretary.

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Telephone Exchange
Nurses' Bureau**

Pediatric Society, Southern Branch.—On the evening of July 23, at a meeting held at the Barlow Medical Library, Los Angeles, the Pediatric Society of Southern California was organized. The officers elected were as follows: President, W. A. Edwards, M. D.; Vice-President, P. V. K. Johnson, M. D.; Secretary and Treasurer, Victor Stork, M. D.; Councilors, Henry Dietrich, M. D., and R. B. Mixsell, M. D.

The Society has for its object the advancement of the study of infancy and childhood, and to this end will include as associate members those interested in the various phases of child study.

It is planned to hold meetings from time to time, when papers will be read by men of authority in the field of Pediatrics.

An effort is being made to show the Government Child Welfare Exhibit in Los Angeles under the auspices of the Society.

Southern California Medical Society. Fifty-Second Regular Semi-Annual Meeting.—Officers: F. W. Thomas, M. D., Claremont, President; W. T. McArthur, M. D., Los Angeles, First Vice-President; J. K. Swindt, M. D., Pomona, Second Vice-President; Walter Brem, M. D., Los Angeles, Secretary and Treasurer. Committee on Arrangements: R. E. Austin, San Diego, Chairman. . . .

From "San Francisco Session."—The reports of the proceedings of the Annual Session of the American Medical Association, held at San Francisco, which appeared in the JOURNAL last week, are gratifying evidence of the work being done by the organization. The attendance was fully

as large as the most optimistic expected. The number who registered from the Pacific Coast States proved the interest of the profession in that territory. The minutes of the House of Delegates show the efforts of the Association in advancing the usefulness of the profession in serving the public. The exhaustive study of the relations which physicians must meet in the sociologic conditions which prevail, especially in the development of workmen's compensation legislation, as they are presented in that portion of the report of the Judicial Council devoted to this subject, merits special attention. . . .

From "Report of the Tuberculosis Situation in San Francisco."—"The public measure most necessary for the control of tuberculosis in San Francisco at the present time is a special Tuberculosis Bureau of the Department of Public Health. This Bureau should be created with an annual appropriation of at least \$40,000 for the single purpose of fighting the 'White Plague' in San Francisco."

This is one of the chief recommendations included in a special report on tuberculosis conditions in the city, made by the San Francisco Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis to the Department of Public Health at the request of the latter.

The special Bureau would, according to the report, establish clinics in different sections of the city for free examination of patients; employ visiting nurses to coöperate with physicians in the care of patients and their families in the home; wage a campaign of education; supervise the disinfection of premises after death or removal of a patient; promote good housing, working and living conditions, and further investigate conditions in the city and make recommendations for bettering them. . . .